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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 PRETORIA 002873

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OTRA](#) [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [ASEC](#) [SF](#) [TZ](#)

SUBJECT: COUNTRY CLEARANCE GRANTED FOR ACOTA - WILLIAM G. (CHIP)
BECK AND JOHN SEVOLD

REF: STATE 104907
STATE 109668

¶1. Embassy Pretoria welcomes and grants country clearance to ACOTA Coordinator William G. (Chip) Beck and John Sevold from July 15-22, ¶2006. The purpose of the visit is follow-up on the JUN DEFCOM meeting requirements and for a site visit to Bloemfontein Mission Readiness Training center and other areas in preparation for the series of upcoming ACOTA training events and plans with SANDF. Lieutenant Colonel Brian Smith is the primary point of contact for this visit. Embassy points of contact are: Political Officer Timothy Trenkle, office (27) (12) 431-4372, home (27) (12) 460-7842, cell 084-950-0694, email: TrenkleTP@state.gov; Army Attach, Colonel Michael Garrison, office (27) (12) 431-4182, home (27) (12) 346-3699, cell (27) (84) 950-0510, email: GarrisonME@state.gov; Chief Office of Defense Cooperation, LtCol Brian Smith, office (27) (12) 431-4708; cell (27) (84) 950-0659, email: SmithBP@state.gov.

Please see CRIME below for information concerning baggage pilferage at Johannesburg International Airport (JIA).

¶2. Hotel reservations for Beck and Sevold have been made for late check in on July 15, and check out on July 19 for Sevold, and late check out on July 22 for Beck, at the Whistletree Lodge; Queenswood Pretoria. Phone: (27) (12) 333-9915/6, fax (27) (12) 333-9917. Room rates are within per diem and include breakfast. Transportation has also been arranged.

¶3. VISAS

Please Note: Your passport must 1) be valid for 30 days beyond planned stay in South Africa and 2) contain at least two clean (unstamped) pages whenever you enter South Africa. Otherwise, you run the risk of being turned back.

Initiating Travel from the U. S.

South Africa no longer requires that U.S. citizens obtain visas for a stay in South Africa of 90 days or less--this applies to bona fide TDY, business, medical or tourist travel. (Visitors overstaying this visa limit may be assessed a fine upon departure or renewal of visa.) Upon arrival in South Africa, the traveler will be issued a visitor's permit for a maximum stay of 90 days.

Initiating Travel from a Third Country

Similarly, at this time visas no longer are required for U.S. citizens bearing tourist, official or diplomatic passports and traveling to South Africa for any purpose. However, please check prior to your departure with the South African Consulate in the host country for up-to-date visa information.

¶4. ACCOMMODATION EXCHANGE AND PER DIEM

At the Embassy, accommodation exchange facilities are available via Citibank, which is located in the lower lobby of the Chancery.

Embassy Pretoria has recently acquired an ATM, and ATM/credit cards are accepted at most major establishments throughout South Africa.

Due to constant currency fluctuations and special events, Post strongly recommends that travelers to Embassy Pretoria request actual subsistence authority in travel authorizations in accordance with 6 FAM 156. By doing so, travelers can avoid being "out of pocket" when actual lodging exceeds the maximum lodging allowance.

15. THREAT ASSESSMENT

While there are no areas within South Africa where travel is restricted for official visitors, they should consult with the Regional Security Office at post for the latest threat assessment, or check the post Web site.

16. SECURITY TRAINING

All persons traveling to Pretoria for TDY stays of 30 days or more must attend the four-day Security Overseas Seminar/Working in an Embassy course at the Foreign Service Institute prior to arriving at Post (please contact FSI for details). Agencies that choose to provide equivalent security training must provide written certification to the State Department's Bureau of Diplomatic Security (William Armor, Assistant Director for Training, armorwd@state.gov; 703/205-2617) that its course meets FSI's criteria for overseas personal security training.

17. CRIME

Crimes common to urban destinations worldwide--ATM scams, credit card fraud, hotel theft, muggings--are very much present in urban South Africa. To a lesser extent, counterfeit U. S. currency and

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check-cashing scams have been reported. Please use all available means to protect credit cards, credit card numbers and personal identification numbers.

There is a serious problem of baggage pilferage at JIA, particularly travelers changing airlines and those flying on smaller airlines--passengers flying on major international carriers are not affected to the same degree. Post recommends that travelers lock their luggage, use an airport plastic wrapping service and avoid placing electronics, jewelry, cameras or other valuables in luggage. Make an inventory of items in checked baggage to aid in claims processing if theft does occur.

All visitors should use caution in the downtown areas surrounding their hotels, especially in the major cities. Increased anti-crime efforts in city cores have made the suburbs of major metropolitan areas increasingly attractive targets for car hijacking and robbery.

Visitors should be careful in central city areas near major taxi ranks, where taxi operators occasionally resort to violence to protect their routes, especially in KwaZulu Natal and the Eastern Cape. Visitors should exit taxi rank areas immediately at the first sign of a disturbance. The Embassy discourages visitors from using mini-bus taxis, which follow fixed routes and are flagged down by passengers almost everywhere on the streets and roads of South Africa. Many of these vehicles fail to meet minimal safety standards; drivers frequently overload the vehicles and travel at excessive speeds. Fatal accidents involving these conveyances are very common. Travelers should also avoid local commuter and metro trains, even during off-peak, non-rush hour periods, as a number of Americans have been the victims of muggings and violent attacks.

18. DRIVING

Traffic accidents may be as great a hazard as the more publicized crime. Visitors should use great caution when driving, given the relatively high rates of driver speed on major thoroughfares, poor lighting on rural roads, presence of pedestrians and slow moving vehicles, aggressive driving behavior and insufficient regulatory

control regarding licensing and vehicle maintenance. Traffic drives on the left in South Africa, which requires U. S. drivers to exercise particular caution. Special care should be taken if driving at night, but travelers should avoid night driving if at all possible.

9. MEDICAL

Medical care in South Africa is of the standard of the United States and Western Europe. First-rate physicians and hospitals are available. However, the following areas are of particular significance:

MALARIA: The dangerous and potentially fatal falciparum malaria is endemic to the North Eastern part of the country. It is essential that visitors traveling to many of the game parks, including Kruger Park, and those traveling to some other parts of Kwazulu Natal and the northern provinces, take malaria prophylaxis (either mefloquine or doxycycline) and use mosquito repellents at all times of the year regardless of the duration of their visit.

HIV/AIDS: South Africa has more HIV-infected persons than any other country in the world. All of the usual precautions must be taken to avoid this easily prevented infection. South Africa has one of the highest incidences of rape in the world, and while rape of foreigners has happened on rare occasions, Americans and other foreigners are not specifically targeted. In the highly unlikely case of sexual assault, it is recommended that the victim take post-exposure prophylaxis as soon as feasible, and certainly within 48 hours. The health unit at Embassy Pretoria can advise on this matter.

YELLOW FEVER: South Africa requires that travelers from sites where yellow fever is prevalent (other parts of Africa and Central and South America) present proof of vaccination for yellow fever done within the last ten years. Such a traveler arriving without this record WILL BE vaccinated at the at the point of entry and charged approximately \$80.

DVT: Regardless of where you are coming from, the flight to Johannesburg is likely to be a very long one. To lessen the likelihood of developing potentially dangerous Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT) in the legs during a lengthy trip, it is advised that the traveler get up and walk around at least every ninety minutes while awake. Getting an aisle seat is a good idea to facilitate walking on intercontinental aircraft in which the seating very often is cramped.

10. VALUE ADDED TAX (VAT)

REFUNDS: Non-resident foreign passport holders on a temporary visit

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to South Africa are able to claim a VAT refund, provided that the supplier levied VAT and is a VAT-registered vendor. To obtain a tax invoice for VAT refunds, you must identify yourself as a tourist to the shop assistant and request a tax invoice for the goods you have purchased. Upon departure from one of the three international airports in South Africa (Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban), you will be required to present your purchases as well as the relevant tax invoices to a VAT refund official for inspection. Once the official has endorsed the invoices, you must present your claim at the VAT office located at the airport. Should you require more information on VAT refunds, information brochures are available upon your arrival at the airport.

Please note that the vast majority of American visitors complete their travels in South Africa without incident.

11. Travelers wanting to connect to Pretoria's SBU network with a laptop must meet the following conditions: laptop must be government procured and owned; must be set up with DOS security standards and software; must be controlled in transit by the user or shipped to post via Pouch; will be scanned by ISSO for security setup prior to allowing its use on the network; and SMS client and antivirus software will be installed

on the laptop by the network once connected.

Note: Laptops are not allowed in CAA spaces without prior approval of RSO.

TEITELBAUM